

**Preaching Perspectives: James**  
**Seventeen Expository Sermon Outlines**

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## Preaching Perspectives: JAMES

### \*\*\* TROUBLES (1:2-12)

- I Troubles Are Many & Simply Part of Life (1:2)
  - A. Attitude: “Count it all joy”
  - B. Anticipation: “When you fall”
  - C. Different forms or flavors: “Divers”
  - D. Outward troubles: “Temptations ”
- II Troubles Can Be Meaningful (1:3-4)
  - A. They produce “patience”
  - B. They develop character - “that you may be perfect and entire, lacking nothing”
- III Troubles Can Be Mastered (1:5-8)
  - A. How to handle them: “let him ask of God . . .”
  - B. Expect God to answer: “in faith nothing wavering . . .”
  - C. Comparison: “like a wave of the sea . . .”
- IV Troubles May Involve Money (1:9-11)
  - A. The lack of money is common to many: “the brother of low degree”
  - B. Faith in God is the way to be “exalted”
  - C. The rich who trust in riches rather than God will be “made low” and merely “pass away.”
- V Troubles May Be Measured in Light of Eternity (1:12)
  - A. The word “blessed” speaks of an inner quality of happiness which comes from God – not affected by outward situations.
  - B. When troubles are handled from God’s perspective (“endureth temptation”), they produce the superior life.
  - C. “Crown of life” means a quality of life (joy, victory, honor) which begins now & continues forever.

### \*\*\* TRACKS OF TEMPTATION (1:13-16)

- I The Certainty of Temptation (1:13)
  - A. Not “if” but “when.”
  - B. To tempt means “to allure or entice to danger.”
- II The Cause of Temptation (1:13-14)
  - A. Some blame the devil.
  - B. Some blame God.
  - C. Some blame heredity, environment, parents, spouses, etc.

- D. God says it is within us: “our own lusts.”
- III The Consequences of Temptation (1:15-16)
  - A. When we do not resist temptation, it leads to “sin & death.”
  - B. Consequences are certain and severe.
- IV The Cure for Temptation
  - A. I Corinthians 10:13
  - B. 2 Peter 2:9
  - C. 1 John 2:2
  - D. Hebrews 2:17-18

\*\*\* A CONSISTENT GOD (1:17-18)

- I God Never Changes in Regard to His Philanthropy (1:17)
  - A. Philanthropy means “helpfulness to humanity.”
  - B. God is the source of “good” in this world.
- II God Never Changes in Regard to His Personhood (1:17)
  - A. God’s character: “Father of lights”
  - B. Variation occurs among created heavenly bodies but not the Creator of those heavenly bodies.
- III God Never Changes in Regard to His Power (1:18)
  - A. His saving/regenerative power (“of His own will He begot us”)
  - B. This takes place “by the word of truth.”
  - C. The Bible must be what is preached – not fads or even self.
- IV God Never Changes in Regard to His Purpose (1:18)
  - A. Consecration: “firstfruits among His creatures.”
  - B. Cooperation.

\*\*\* THE NEW LIFE: HEARING THE WORD (1:19-21)

- I Swift to Hear (1:19)
  - A. Nowhere is “hearing” more important than in regard to “the Word of truth.”
  - B. Romans 10:17 – Hebrews 11:6.
- II Slow to Speak (1:19)
  - A. A follow-up from “hearing.”
  - B. Proverbs 10:19 – 13:3 – 17:29 – 29:20
  - C. How often have we later regretted when we spoke too soon.
- III Slow to Wrath/Anger (1:19-20)
  - A. Not all anger is bad or inappropriate.
  - B. Examples: teachers, preachers, parents, etc.
  - C. Inappropriate anger may cause more harm than good.
- IV Humility or Gentleness of Heart (1:21)

- A. There are things to “get rid of” or discard.
- B. There are things to “receive” or embrace.

\*\*\* THE NEW LIFE: HEEDING THE WORD (1:22-25)

I The Admonition (1:22)

- A. To “receive the Word” (v. 21) is *the root*. To “be doers” of the Word is *the fruit*.
- B. Deception may occur in this regard.
- C. The purpose of “hearing” the Word is not to be pleased with a good sermon but to profit from its message.
- D. Christianity is the art of the practical.

II The Analogy (1:23-25).

- A. The mere “hearer” *glances* carelessly, hastily, briefly, even disinterestedly & soon “forgets” what he heard (1:23-24).
- B. The actual “doer” of the Word takes serious, eager, and meaningful *gazes* into the Word on a continual basis.
- C. Here is one who “obeys” what is heard.
- D. Such a one is “blessed.”

\*\*\* FAITH and FRUIT in RELIGION (1:26-27)

I The Christian Religion is Regulated by Speech (1:26)

- A. Ephesians 5:19 – James 4:11 – James 1:19
- B. The “tongue” is a member of the human body and it must be “controlled.”
- C. Matthew 12:34/Luke 6:45
- D. This language is exceedingly strong. Matthew 12:36-37

II The Christian Religion is Regulated by Service (1:27)

- A. “Pure and undefiled” service to the needy.
- B. Jesus spent His life on earth in such service (Acts 10:38).
- C. We cannot substitute religious rituals, ceremonies, and elaborate buildings in place of service.
- D. The basis of judgment (Matthew 25:31-46).

III The Christian Religion is Regulated by Spotlessness (1:27).

- A. This is a call for purity in one’s personal life.
- B. Spiritual warfare is the lot of those who follow God.
- C. The Christian religion knows no other acceptable kind of worship apart from a loving, serviceable, holy life.

\*\*\* DISCRIMINATION: PERSPECTIVES ON PEOPLE (2:1-13)

- I An Evil Pronounced (2:1)
  - A. What it is: “respect of persons”
  - B. An evil the Bible condemns: Lev. 19:15; Mal. 1:8-9; 2:9; Acts 10:34; Rom. 2:11; Eph. 6:9; Col. 3:25
- II An Example Portrayed (2:2-7)
  - A. Rich man – Poor man
  - B. This reveals “doubt” about the Christian faith.
  - C. In the early church, it was the rich who abused the name of Christ.
- III An Exception Permitted (2:8)
  - A. An objection based on the law which they are actually breaking.
  - B. Love of wealth is not what the law commands.
- IV An Exclusion Prohibited (2:9-11)
  - A. The whole law was the will of God.
  - B. Compare with human courts.
- V An Emphasis Prescribed (2:12-13)
  - A. One’s speech and actions reveal one’s moral state.
  - B. “The law of liberty” frees us from sin to obey God.

\*\*\* SAVING FAITH (2:14-26)

- I It is Profitable (2:14-17)
  - A. It profits the one who has it (2:14)
  - B. It is profitable to others (2:15-17)
- II It is Proveable (2:18-26)
  - A. A fruitless faith is unproveable because there are no results.
  - B. Objection
  - C. Mere intellectual belief is demonic.
  - D. One’s lifestyle or conduct provides the needed evidence.
  - E. Examples of such in Abraham (2:21-23) and Rahab (2:25).

\*\*\* THE TONGUE (3:1-12)

- I The Tongue is Powerful (3:1-5)
  - A. Speech is used in “teaching” and should not be entered into without maturity.
  - B. Examples: “bits in horses’ mouth” – “rudder of ship” – “small spark to start great fire”
- II The Tongue Can Be Poisonous (3:5-8)
  - A. “Tongue is the world of iniquity” & “defiles the entire body” (cp. Mt. 15:11)

- B. “Tongue sets the whole course of one’s life on fire” by corrupting relationships from birth to death.
- C. “Tongue is set on fire by hell” – kindled by the devil
- D. It cannot be tamed by man.
- III The Tongue Must Be Policed (3:9-12)
  - A. It has inconsistent and contradictory potential.
  - B. Illustrations of inconsistency.
  - C. Only Jesus can master the tongue – To be in a relationship of deep fellowship with Him is absolutely necessary for victory in this regard.

\*\*\* WISDOM (3:13-18)

- I False Wisdom (3:14-16)
  - A. Characteristics: “Bitter – envying – strife – glory not” (v. 14) - “earthly – sensual – devilish” because it is “not from above” (v. 15)
  - B. Consequences: “confusion & every evil work” (v. 16)
- II True Wisdom (3:17-18)
  - A. Characteristics: “pure – gentle – easy to be intreated (that is, reasonable) – full of mercy & good fruits – without hypocrisy” because it is “from above” (v. 17)
  - B. Consequences: “the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace” (v. 18) – Mt. 5:8

\*\*\* SELFISHNESS (4:1-10)

- I Selfishness Divides People (4:1-2)
  - A. Fruit: “wars and fightings among you” – disharmony in the church
  - B. Root: “lusts that war in your members” – “lusts” refers to “pleasures” which are made the aim in life rather than Jesus Christ.
- II Selfishness Distorts Prayer (4:3)
  - A. Harmful in our horizontal relations with others.
  - B. Harmful in our vertical relations with God.
  - C. “Consume” is same word in Lk. 15:14 about the prodigal son who wasted himself in pleasures.
- III Selfishness Disobeys God (4:4-6)
  - A. Spiritual adultery: blind & deaf to the value of spiritual concerns & the will of God; governed by “the lust of the

flesh, the lust of the eyes, & the pride of life” (1 Jn. 2:16); patterns itself after worldly customs; preoccupied with worldly fame/fortune.

B. God is a jealous lover & does not tolerate rivals.

IV Selfishness Demands Penitence (4:7-10)

A. Ten calls to make changes/repent.

B. By doing so, God “lifts up” those who so “humble” themselves in His sight.

\*\*\* SLANDER (4:11-12)

I Slander is Prohibited (4:11a)

A. The principle of avoiding selfishness and having humility before God calls for humble-mindedness toward fellow Christians.

B. Psalm 15:3

II Slander is Perversion (4:11b)

A. “Judging” begins in the heart and reveals itself by “speaking” from the mouth which are violations of the law of love (Lev. 19:18; Jms 2:8).

B. Slander means we are not “doers of the Word.”

III Slander is Presumptuous (4:12)

A. Presumptuous means “to assume or take for granted without permission.”

B. Slander means to pass judgment on someone, a right that belongs only to God.

C. We demonstrate arrogance and ignorance when we try to play God.

\*\*\* A PRESCRIPTION FOR PRESUMPTION (4:13-17)

I Avoid Arrogant Confidence (4:13)

A. This is directed to worldly-minded merchants and money-makers who disregard God.

B. A mindset that everything is fixed/settled.

C. Resembles the attitude in Luke 12:16-21.

II Acknowledge Absolute Certainty (4:14)

A. The duration of life is so uncertain.

B. We do not know what the future holds.

C. It is, therefore, important to be “doers” of the Word.

III Apply Accurate Counsel (4:15-17)

- A. Our times are in God's hands and we should plan life with God and His will in mind.
- B. Mt. 10:29
- C. 1 Corinthians 4:19; 16:7
- D. We should only "boast" in God. Philippians 3:3; Galatians 6:14; 2 Corinthians 12:9
- E. Those who ignore these truths are guilty of "sin."

\*\*\* THE MISTAKES OF MATERIALISM (5:1-6)

- I Deceptive Laboring for Things Which Do Not Last (5:1-3)
  - A. Wealth is fleeting & subject to the destructions within time.
  - B. Ignoring the needs of others is a crime.
  - C. Judgment falls on those who use material goods selfishly.
  - D. The world does not go on forever.
- II Defrauding Laborers of Appropriate Wages (5:4)
  - A. Greed is a special form of cruelty.
  - B. Defrauding laborers demonstrate inhumanity to man. Malachi 3:5
  - C. God hears the cries of those mistreated.
- III Deluded Laboring for Pleasure and Power (5:5-6)
  - A. Luxury and self-indulgence is a poor pursuit.
  - B. Luke 16:19-31
  - C. Expect torment in the next life.
  - D. The selfish pursuit of riches dulls our ears to God's voice and displeases Him immensely. 1 Timothy 6:10

\*\*\* STEDFASTNESS (5:7-12)

- I The Exhortation Behind Stedfastness (5:7-8)
  - A. The return of Jesus Christ is the basis for steadfastness.
  - B. 1 Peter 4:8-9; 1 Corinthians 16:14, 22; Philippians 4:5; Hebrews 10:24-25; 1 John 2:28
  - C. Analogy of farmer
- II The Examples of Stedfastness (5:10-11).
  - A. Examples serve to encourage.
  - B. These OT examples of stedfastness from the past should inspire us to be stedfast in the present.
  - C. God rewards stedfastness.
- III The Exclusions within Stedfastness (5:9, 12)

- A. Avoid complaining against each other.
- B. Avoid swearing or using oaths which is the wrong way to use God's name.
- C. Matthew 5:33-37; 12:37

\*\*\* PRAYER (5:13-20)

- I Pray Experientially (5:13-15)
  - A. Pray in the experience of "suffering."
  - B. Pray "praise songs" in the experience of "cheerfulness."
  - C. Pray in the experience of "sickness."
- II Pray Earnestly (5:16a)
  - A. Prayer is to accompany "confession of faults."
  - B. Prayer is to be accompanied by sincerity and confidentiality.
- III Pray Energetically (5:16b)
  - A. Prayer should be "fervent" and have energy with it.
  - B. Prayer moves God to action. 1 Samuel 1:13; Isaiah 38  
Ephesians 6:18; Philippians 4:6
- IV Pray Expectantly (5:17-18)
  - A. Elijah prayed expectantly that it "would not" rain.
  - B. Elijah prayer expectantly that it "would" rain.

\*\*\* WORDS ABOUT WANDERING (5:19-20)

- I Recognize the Possibility of Wandering (5:19)
  - A. The people of concern: "brethren."
  - B. To "err from the truth" occurs when Christians go astray or away from God's will and the principles of attitudes and actions set forth in the Bible – and the ones James has addressed in this letter. As he has already noted in 3:2, "in many things we all offend."
- II Reclaim the Person Who Wanders (5:19)
  - A. Do not castigate but reinvigorate, motivate, and reinstate. Cp. Luke 22:32; Galatians 6:1.
  - B. Reclaim with genuine concern, saturated with prayer, and in conjunction with his "err from the truth" [of the authority of God's Word in his life] and thus about "the error of his way."
- III Rejoice in the Pardon From Wandering (5:20)

- A. To “convert” and “save” means to restore to full enjoyment of and participation in fellowship with God and His intended ways of life.
- B. Psalm 32:1 – 1 Peter 4:8
- C. Those who wander from the fold are forgiven by God and should be forgiven by God’s people. The bloopers are cancelled and the blessings lead to congratulations by fellow-believers.
- D. Restoration of wandering believers is not a part-time or occasionally optional hobby but a full-time vocation. This is part of what it means to be a follower of Jesus Christ.
- E. In the words of the hymn, “What a fellowship, what a joy divine, learning on the everlasting arms!”